

Terry Blanchard
EDTC 6010
Dr. Pantelidis
Summer I, 2006

The Internet -Global Information Space and the Web: Then, Now and Beyond

As we travel from place to place searching or surfing the web, we find information on almost any topic imaginable. This so called “Information Super Highway” has brought about many changes in our daily lives and in our pursuit of educational endeavors. The means to learn, study and communicate about interesting information is just a mere click or push of a button away. As stated by Berners-Lee, “The goal of the Web was to be a shared information space through which people (and machines) could communicate.”¹

The World Wide Web (which most of us know as www) was invented by Tim-Berners Lee in 1989. In another site I visited, the creation of the web is said to have evolved due to the contributions of hundreds of people. Looking through the list, it does give Berners-Lee credit for inventing the first web server (browser) and editor. “1995 was the breakout year for the Internet, when the connection of the large, online service populations to the Web made it known throughout the world.”² In looking at the date, it is

amazing to see the changes and successes that have come about in only a decade.

“The internet (net) is defined as the worldwide, publicly accessible system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard Internet Protocol (IP) or, a collection of interconnected computer networks. World Wide Web is defined as a collection of interconnected documents, linked by URLs, and is accessible using the internet.”³ “URL is pronounced either “U-R-L” or “earl” and is usually found at the top of your web browser.”⁴ For this paper I will use the terms interchangeably since I tend to do that on a daily basis. I never really thought of the two as being mutually independent.

Uses of the internet have changed the way we live, work, and educate our societies. Employees can work and study from home or remote locations. This gives them flexibility in working hours and location. If you need to work on a project at unconventional hours, you have the access to do this. I have certainly used this feature many times. Students can take online courses or use distance education for earning degrees, credits for course work, and diplomas from high school. Most schools and businesses have rigid schedules of operation which may not fit into the lives of modern-day society. Having this choice can create a feeling of self-motivation and responsibility that leads to more productive work, and allows more persons

to finish high school and/or continue their education. Use of the internet in the past 10 years has grown phenomenally. “As of January 2006, over 1 billion people use the internet according to Internet World Stats.”⁵

In the educational sector, using the internet by sharing files and streaming media makes for easy access of documents, publications, music, software products, video and graphics. It is mass communication and delivery at the present. This allows for more time spent on researching and working, rather than on visiting the library or reading printed material. I remember spending numerous hours in the library in the 70’s. I probably would have stayed all night if it had been open. The ease of having these resources at hand anytime day or night is miraculous and wonderful. I tend to do my best work late at night. This was always a problem for me since we didn’t have the internet or web to use. In some respects, I guess this could present some problems for people who become addicted to the use of this tool. Being that you have access 24 hours a day, you may find yourself using it as a substitute or replacement for ordinary, daily activities or contacts. You have the ability to make contact with people from all over the world and from all walks of life.

Internet access is common in our homes, schools, public places (libraries, airports, hotels, and some restaurants.) Due to easy access and

mass media capabilities, crime becomes a factor. It may come in the form of unethical, or inappropriate material, viruses (programs used to destroy our computer files), copyright infringements, identity theft, sexual predators, or pornography. We must protect our children and students from as much of this as possible. Having a filter on your system can block out much of this unwanted material. The problem is that there is always someone working on creating a way to get past that block. We must use common sense and strict guidelines in teaching our children safe and responsible use of the internet. Being in the field of Instructional Technology, we carry a great deal of the burden in communicating the need for guidelines and rules of etiquette when using the internet. We should be aware and tuned in to the problems that certainly arise when we all use this mass communication tool. Use of the URL's (Uniform Resource Locator) should be carefully monitored in schools. When keying these in the address line, we should be careful with our spelling and watch for those that give unwanted information.

(Ex: www.whitehouse.com and www.whitehouse.org can give you conflicting information to say the least.)

In conclusion, the use of the internet gives us the freedom to work, play, and study or just relax whenever we want to. We can research topics of interest, advance our education (online courses), communicate, be

entertained, or just browse for simple curiosity of what is out there on the web. We can shop online, bank online, market a product or service, run a business, advertise, listen to music or the radio, watch movies, watch television, check the weather forecast, read the local or world news, chat, E-Mail, or just play games. What did we do with all of that spare time in the past? As technological advances are discovered, you would think that we would have more time to devote to our passions--I don't think that is the case!

¹The World Wide Web, (<http://iste.org/>), Retrieved 1-Jun-2006

²Internet, Web-Online rush to the Web, (<http://livinginternet.com/w/wi-online.htm>), Retrieved 3-Jun-2006

³ "Internet," (<http://www.wikipeida.org/wiki/Internet>). Wikipeida.org, Retrieved 1-Jun-2006.

⁴Tim-Berners-Lee, History Keynote Speech, unit 1-part 4, 1997.

⁵Dave Kristula, Creation of the Internet: History of the Internet, updated Aug. 2001

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Berners-Lee, Tim (1997). History of the Internet. Retrieved 1-June-2006
(<http://www.iste.org>)

Cerf, Vint (2003). Brief History of the Internet. Retrieved 31-May-2006
(<http://www.livinginternet.com>)

Kristula, Dave (2001). The History of the Internet. Retrieved 1-Jun-2006
<http://www.davesite.com/webstation/net-history.shtml>

Online Rush to the Web. Retrieved 31-May-2006
(http://www.livinginternet.com/w/wi_online.htm)

History of the Internet and Web. <http://www.googlesearch.com>

The Internet and the World Wide Web. http://en.wikipeida.org/wiki/Internet#The-World_Wide_Web

Hobbes' Internet Timeline v8.1. Retrieved 31-May-2006
(<http://www.zakon.org/robert/internet/timeline/>)

Long, Tony, It's Just the Internet Now. Retrieved 30-May-2006
(<http://wired.com/news/culture>)